THE OCCURRENCE OF *OGYRIS* (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE) IN EMPTY SATURNIID COCOONS

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Abstract

Ogyris ianthis Waterhouse and *O. olane ocela* Waterhouse were recovered from empty cocoons of the moth *Antheraea loranthi* Lucas (fam. Saturniidae) near Leyburn, south-eastern Queensland. Two other species of *Ogyris, O. barnardi* Miskin and *O. amaryllis* Hewitson have previously been recorded sheltering in empty saturniid cocoons.

Ogyris ianthis Waterhouse is one of the several *Ogyris* species inhabiting the dry sclerophyll forest areas around Leyburn, south-eastern Queensland. In spring 1979, Stephen Johnson pointed out a Eucalyptus from which he had recovered *O. ianthis* pupae from beneath bands placed on the trunk of the tree. The eucalypt was heavily infested with mistletoe and the ant which attends *O. ianthis* larvae, *Froggattella kirbyi* (Lowne), was present in large numbers.

The tree was revisited in late January, 1980. While searching high in the tree, approximately six metres from the ground, many *F. kirbyi* were noticed around a 'clump' of empty saturniid cocoons. The cocoons were situated at the base of the mistletoe *Amyema miquelii* (Lehm. ex Miq.) Tiegh and the ants were entering the emergence holes left by the adult moths.

The cocoons were formed by larvae of *Antheraea loranthi* Lucas (fam. Saturniidae) which feed on mistletoe and become gregarious when spinning their cocoons. The clump of cocoons was removed from the base of the mistletoe and taken to Brisbane. Partial examination revealed the presence of a fourth instar *O. ianthis* larva (Fig. 1), so the cocoons were placed in a plastic bag with mistletoe obtained from the host tree.

Fig. 1. Fourth instar larva of *Ogyris ianthis* found shletering in empty saturniid cocoons at Leyburn, January, 1980.

From January 28th to February 12th, four males and five females of *O. ianthis* emerged from the cocoons as well as a female of *O. olane ocela* Waterhouse. Although there were approximately 14 empty saturniid cocoons in the clump, inspection revealed that most of the *Ogyris* pupae were located in only four. These few cocoons had their openings near the point of attachment to the mistletoe base and this position would have allowed easy access to the food plant. Inspection also revealed the presence of three *O. ianthis* larvae parasitised by braconid wasps.

Two other *Ogyris* species are known to shelter in empty saturniid cocoons. Le Souef (1977) found the larvae and pupae of *O. barnardi barnardi* Miskin, *O. amaryllis amaryllis* Hewitson and *O. a. meridionalis* Bethune-Baker sheltering in the cocoons of *Antheraea engaea* Turner, another moth that feeds on mistletoe.

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Reference

Le Souef, J. C., 1977. A ladder is a help for *Ogyris*. *Victorian Ent.* 7(6): 74-75.

A FOOD GATHERING STRATEGY OF THE BLACK JUMPER ANT *MYRMECIA PILOSULA* (SMITH) (HYMENOPTERA: FORMICIDAE)

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The black jumper ant, *Myrmecia pilosula* (Smith) is an active aggresive ant which is abundant in the Australian high country.

In December 1981, at Sawpit Creek in Kosciusko National Park, a worker of this species was observed sitting motionless on the petals of a Brachycome daisy. This was so unusual that it was decided to try to photograph it. While still observing the ant through the viewfinder a small flowerfly landed on the yellow centre of the flower. The ant instantly jumped at the fly and simultaneously arched its body to sting it. The ant proceeded to carry the fly over the side of the flower, pausing once to sting the still feebly struggling fly before moving under the petals to the stem.

There was little doubt that the ant had been lying in wait for prey and, having been alerted to this behaviour, a watch was kept on other plants during the rest of the walk. Many ants were seen but only one other was observed waiting on a flower. Thus, it appears that an ambush technique is a food gathering strategy which is occasionally used by this species.

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